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ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE.

OUR Saviour has said, "Ask, and it shall be given you. If ye, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" And, in using the same exhortation on another occasion, he specifies "the Holy Spirit" as the gift bestowed on those who ask of God.

The desire of good is natural to man. What seems good is, however, not always good, but sometimes proves an evil. Good and evil lie so intermixed, that the hand which aims to select a good takes up an adjacent evil. Our perceptions, before they have learned to discriminate, deceive us. The child is a rare one that has never burnt itself, and found out by experience that what looks beautiful is sometimes very harmful. This belongs to human infirmity, rather than arises from sin.

We also desire a particular thing, which the moral sense, given us to know the right and the wrong, forbids. We do not desire it as a sin, but though it is a sin. It continues present to the mind, it inflames the passions still more, until these overcome the scruples of conscience, and the forbidden thing is obtained. But mark the result on natures hitherto comparatively innocent. It is as when Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees in the garden of Eden. The pleasure

of eating the forbidden fruit, that has passed so quickly away, is a poor compensation for the self-reproach that follows. But the evil effects of the first sin do not deter from sinning. Appetite has acquired strength by indulgence, and, having conquered conscience once, is better able to conquer it again. The law written on the heart, having been broken, has lost something of its sacredness and fear. The penalty, lying behind gratification, is not so near nor so visible to influence a person as the gratification itself. Still he sees better things and approves them, while he follows the worse. He has become a bond-slave to sin, but vehemently wishes at times to break the chain. He cannot make up his deliberate choice and say, "Evil, be thou my good;" but often when he has wandered far, and his course has driven him to the extremest wretchedness, he comes to himself, and longs to return to duty; nor perhaps in the farthest imaginable remove from God, even in the future world, may the desire cease to exist.

Under the light of that revelation which has brought life and immortality into clear light, and disclosed the beauty of holiness in the example of Jesus Christ, and imparted an idea of the blessedness of the righteous in a future state, the desire to become a Christian is a frequent guest of the soul. We have the consciousness of not being what we ought to be, and we wish this contradiction in ourselves to exist no longer. We wish to be born again into the feelings of a child; we wish to become new creatures in Christ; we wish old things to pass away, and all things to become new. How shall we do this? How choose the good, and refuse the evil? How with both the flesh and mind serve the law of God? In a word, how be redeemed and saved?

Jesus, the Teacher sent from God, tells us how: "Ask, and ye shall receive." The source of our recovery, and of our strength to do right, and of our power to obtain that which is truly good, is in God our heavenly Father.

Our good desires are apt to be nothing more than desires. They arise in us, then leave us for a season. Our Saviour's instruction is, that we should give expression to our desires in prayer to God. Why is that when one desires repentance, faith, holiness, heaven, true knowledge of God and Christ, whom to know is life eternal, — why is it that he does not pray as well as desire? It is in part from want of faith. But how much has Jesus endeavored to produce filial confidence in the Father!

Are you a father? When your children ask bread, do you give them a stone? If you, in whom parental affection, though strong, is not without alloy, — if you give your children what needful things they request, how much more shall your heavenly Father, perfect in love and immutable in faithfulness, give to *his* children what needful things they desire! Do not doubt his willingness to bestow needed good. Believe that the very desire is an indication from him to lead you to attain its object. Try the efficacy of asking it of God.

It is perhaps from this point of view that we may better understand the import of another direction to the seeker after good. "No man," said Jesus, "cometh unto the Father but by me." There exists not the influence, apart from what Jesus has communicated of the Father, to induce the soul to repair to God. The true object of filial trust is pointed out by him; and, beholding, we spontaneously ask of him. It has contributed to hide God from men that science has introduced the habit of speaking of the laws of nature; and we miss seeing Him, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things. The idea of God becomes more and more vague and indefinite. The divine, parental features are hid under a veil. Now, men do not feel like asking good things of the laws of nature, or of such a deity as exists only in the life of nature, in the life of suns, stars, earth, trees, rocks, seas, rivers, flowers, man, — a deity which is life in all, but is not the living, active Source whence that life comes; is nature, rather than the Author of nature. Nor are they satisfied with this view. "Show us the Father" is the language of their hearts. It is Jesus who reveals him, — God our Father, who worketh hitherto, through all, and in all, and ABOVE all. And the upspringing filial confidence, when we have once beheld him, responds to the words of Jesus, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Theology also, professing to give us its science of God, has presented a Being in whom the human reason and human heart have seen but little to win their reverence and love. Said John Wesley of certain views of the divine nature current in his day, and having a wide circulation still, "I could sooner be a Turk, a Deist, yea, an Atheist, than I could believe this." They are not few, who, feeling obliged to choose between infidelity and certain doctrinal exhibitions of Christianity, have accepted the former; but, not finding in it that which could satisfy their deepest wants,

have been persuaded to look for themselves into the records of Christianity, where they have been able to see the true God in the Father whom Christ has revealed. They have found Christ, too, in finding God; and both appear more glorious from the very contrast of the true ideas with the perversities of a false theology.

That which brings the skeptic, and whomsoever else, to the feet of Christ, is the sense of spiritual need, especially the need of spiritual help to recover the soul from the dominion of sin. The gift of the Holy Spirit to secure this recovery is the chief of all the good things that come down from the Father of lights. It is by the promise of this spiritual aid, more perhaps than by any other inducement, that the sinner is drawn in hope to Christ. "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The language of the apostle Paul expresses the need and longing after redemption, — "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord," is the exultant song of him who has discovered the way of redemption.

The hope of pardon of past sins is connected in the gospel with repentance, which, in the true sense, is change of mind, change of character; ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well: in other words, it is redemption from the dominion of sin. It is not simply that we believe we shall be forgiven if we repent; but the experience of help from God to overcome the dominion of sin is in itself a pledge of pardon. A new life commencing with holy purposes and acts is a substantial ground of hope in the soul. And here is seen the truth of Peter's declaration, that Jesus was exalted to *give repentance* and remission of sins. He is the means of its being given. He conducts the soul to the Source where it is to be obtained. At the right hand of the Father, he who truly sees him sees the Father, and with the supplication, "Abba, Father," receives simultaneously with asking.

There is, moreover, another view given in the New Testament, which is most significant and important. Jesus Christ is himself called "that Spirit," and again, "a life-giving Spirit." There is in his teachings, in his character and works, in his life and death, in his resurrection and ascension, a quickening spiritual power, which, in the hearts of those who receive him, breaks the bondage of sin, and gives redemption. He reveals the Father, whom beholding, the soul asks out of its own irrepressible sense

of need; and the Father reveals to prayer the fulness of the Son whom he has sent, — that fulness of the Godhead, which, flowing from the Father into the Son, flows also into the souls of those who receive the Son, and gives them power to become sons of God. It is the knowledge of God and Christ both that is eternal life.

The spiritual help extended to the soul, in its first successful endeavor to break away from the dominion of sin, will be continually needed. "Ask, and it shall be given you," applies through the whole of the Christian believer's experience. The redemptive work ceases in man when prayer ceases. But the first new life awakened by the power of Jesus, nourished by the same means with which it began, fed constantly from the same heavenly Source, will be perfected in the higher life above, whither he is the soul's forerunner.

We have spoken of the greatest needs of man. But he who came to seek and to save that which was lost, had regard to man's *temporal* as well as spiritual wants. He knew very well our natural solicitude on that point, and gave us manifold assurance respecting it. Ask of God *temporal* things, and you shall receive what you really need, — "good things" from God. In one of our Saviour's parables, he speaks of "a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day," of whom it was said that he received his "good things" in his "life-time." Not *such* good things has Jesus promised to him who asks of God. Not rich dress, stately mansions, showy furniture, upholstery, equipage, attendance, luxurious living, bank-stock, railroad shares, or hard money, are we to look upon as the "good things" to be asked of God. Probably human life seems to most of us quite incomplete without these. But the substantial goods of life, that which is necessary and convenient, that condition which shall not be an unfit environment and appurtenance of a child of God on earth, the worthy state of man or woman, and not their mere artificial wants, competence, and while not the show and luxury of Dives, certainly not the decrepitude and poverty of Lazarus, — these let us ask of God, as well as that Holy Spirit which renews and sanctifies, and we shall receive. And though every rule has its exceptions, and the history of Christianity, especially in the first transition primitive age, is a history of deprivation and suffering, earthly compe-

tence and peace have been the usual gifts of God to his children. The gospel itself elevates man's temporal condition, turns the waste place into a garden, makes the desert bloom with flowers; and the sufferings of primitive or of any succeeding times are not worthy to be compared with the glory that has been revealed even in the progress of Christian civilization from age to age.

Still, however, there are many failures of obtaining large, genuine, substantial temporal good among such as may aim to conform their lives and pursuits to Christ's law. And why is this? First, they may really have a large share of the good things, and yet in their desire for more, or for the factitious, enjoy not the really good blessings they have received from God. Secondly, they begin right, they seek right ends, they live for a time in the spirit of true contentment; but at last, yielding to the temptations of society, they desire what is neither for happiness nor honor, and so lose true enjoyment of temporal good. Moreover, society is so woven together, like warp and woof, business has such infinite entanglements, that there is a vast deal of vicarious suffering among men, and temporal good is exceedingly fluctuating. When the law of love and of right-doing shall prevail through society, good men will not find themselves so often frustrated. But how much evil even now would be avoided, if the Christian would carry into every relation this precept of Jesus, "Ask, and ye shall receive"! For among the things promised is included *wisdom*. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not." Our failures, our disappointments in temporal matters, are oftener chargeable to our own ignorance and imprudence than to others' wrong-doing. He who shall ask of God for wisdom how to conduct in his transactions with men, or in his general intercourse with others, and shall resolutely carry his convictions of right into every thing, will assuredly find, that though, compared with others, he has less in number of good things, he is among the few who truly inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Err we may, through that human infirmity, that frail and vain state, to which God of his own will has subjected created man in hope. Tried with affliction we shall be, according to that appointment of God which he does not permit prayer to reverse, and which, in our present state, God's love would not allow him to reverse. But from our errors prayer will lift us up

wiser, and trials shall afterwards secure more abundantly the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

"Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Without this, no spiritual attainment, no conquest of appetite, no Christ-like manifestation of character, no achievement making man the true benefactor of his fellow-man, no ascent upward among the seats of the just made perfect, has ever been made. Not the true enjoyment even of temporal good has been secured without it. But he who, with the desire of good born in his soul, and the impulse awakened to pursue it, and the perseverance to obtain it, has asked and sought of God, shall subdue all things adverse; shall have food to eat the world knows not of; shall have a divine strength helping him along; shall know that to be a genuine seeker is to follow along where the paths of God drop fatness, and mercies distil as morning dew; shall climb the rugged heights of virtue without weariness; shall behold heaven open wide her ever-during gates, as he reverently knocks at her portals; shall enter in to go no more out for ever.

N. S. F.

LIFE OF MRS. WARE.

THE memoir of Mrs. Ware, although recently published, has already been so widely circulated and so eagerly read, not only by her personal friends, but by all to whom the name of Henry Ware was in any degree familiar, that it would seem superfluous in us to attempt any sketch of a character so vividly portrayed by the pen of one to whom her private life was so familiar, and who has entered with such full appreciation into the deeper experiences of her spiritual being. But as the volume in our own possession has passed from hand since we completed its rapid perusal, we have been peculiarly struck by the different impressions it has made upon different minds. Some, regarding her character as far beyond their possible sphere; others, feeling that her self-sacrificing spirit and devoted life stood in too severe contrast with their own ease and self-indulgence; and others still, with pure desires and true purposes, yet with a somewhat morbid self-appreciation, and with little force or earnestness of spirit, have spoken of her

influence as *discouraging*, of her character as being of too exalted a nature for their imitation. But for ourselves, and for many others, we believe and hope, the deepest impression left upon the mind, apart from a sincere love and reverence for a heart and life so pure, devoted, and Christ-like, has been that of a quickened faith, a deeper earnestness, and a higher aspiration.

True: her gentle, loving, self-sacrificing, devoted spirit has rebuked our coldness and selfishness; but was there aught in her character *unattainable*, any traits which should not be transcribed upon every Christian heart? The incidents of her life, indeed, were many of them peculiar; but it is the *spirit* evinced, not the incident, at which we would look; and may not that spirit be cultivated by all? And then, too, the outward circumstances of her life were never of her own seeking; there was no striving for influence or effect, but, modest and retiring, she quietly and cheerfully followed the leadings of Providence, and, unknown to herself, wielded a mighty and potent influence, — the influence of a true Christian heart.

“ Our many deeds, the thoughts that we have thought,
They go out from us, thronging every hour;
And in them all is folded up a power,
That on the earth doth move them to and fro;
And mighty are the marvels they have wrought
In hearts we know not, and may never know.”

And in that most difficult class of duties, at the head of a family, surrounded often by perplexing cares and wearing anxieties, how truly was there peace within her soul! “ Most lives are thronged with anxieties; but there is a spirit that is not overcome of these things, but that bears with them in the high thought of being in fellowship with God.” And such a peace was hers, — not as the world giveth, but of that spirit which the world knows not of.

To speak of such a life and such a character as exerting a *depressing* influence upon other minds, seems to us a grievous wrong to every higher, nobler, and better feeling. For when are we most truly living, — when resting in sluggish indifference and self-content, letting the current of circumstances unheeded drift us onward, with no definite aim, no fixed purposes, no earnest longings, — or when thought is quickened and awake, when life seems real and earnest, when the consciousness of what the soul may become is most deeply realized, and when faith and trust in

God is most true and heartfelt? And does not a character like the one here portrayed, help us to such a life? Does it not show what a true Christian woman may be and do, without ever *seeking* a shining sphere, but simply engaged in the "trivial round and common task" of daily duty? Does not her trusting faith, growing with her growth, and strengthening with her strength, evinced alike in daily home-duties and in hours of the severest need, amid strangers in a distant land, watching alone in anxious solicitude the couch of sickness; or with trusting cheerfulness yielding back to God the life of the little child, the joy and gladness of her home; or bending over the wasting frame of one dearer to her than life; rising up after every new trial, only the stronger, purer, and better girded for coming duties, — does not the *reality* of such a faith deepen *our* trust and hope? And, oh, how much do we need this higher insight, this holier faith, amid the petty cares and details of daily life! To feel that not the outward sphere, not the seeming extent of influence, not the efforts of which the world takes cognizance; but a will in perfect harmony with God's, an entire trust in a Father's guidance, and a simple desire to do that will, wherever it may lead, — is not this what we most deeply need? Would it not invest the humblest duties with a noble dignity, and breathe a celestial fragrance around the most common scenes of life?

And does not every life that deepens such a faith, and quickens such an aspiration, impart a fuller assurance of immortality? Holding conversance with such a spirit, either through direct personal intercourse or through the medium of the written page, do we not feel our own souls strengthened and animated, and girded anew for effort? Can we not go forth with new zeal and earnestness, realizing that whosoever thus liveth and believeth *shall never die*?

No! not a discouraging, but a quickening, animating, healthy influence breathes over our souls from such a heart and such a life. For it brings us nearer to God; and not in prayer alone does the soul draw near the Father, but through every holy and pure example, every higher object that leads it onward and heavenward. "And so *every earnest* movement of the mind of man is upwards and to God, making us sure of that divine presence, toward which the soul is meant to be reaching, and in which hereafter will be its heaven. And, in the eye of faith, what a glory does even this life often wear! Spiritually we are what

we will be, and the meanest of us may have a day such as kings and prophets longed for once, but never saw. For now God is known in Christ, and now in Christ our spiritual nature is regenerate, larger in capacity, and richer in opportunity, and what may become in all of us that which Jesus felt as he prayed, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

And so, be *thou* also faithful in thy seemingly humble sphere of duty and of influence, and thou too shalt grow into the companionship of the pure, the holy, and the blessed, of all ages and all climes.

"And thou shalt walk in soft, white light, with kings and priests abroad;
And thou shalt summer high in bliss, upon the hills of God."

H. M.

TALES OF CHINESE WISDOM.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HERDER.

THE DESPAIRING.

As Kung-Tsee (Confucius), in the bloom of youth, and accompanied by a crowd of young disciples, arrived at the frontiers of the kingdom of Tsi, to which he had been honorably invited, he heard the voice of one despairing, who, seated beneath a tree, was about to take his own life. Kung-Tsee descended from his chariot, and addressed him kindly. "Child of misfortune," he said, "tell me the source of thy trouble: perchance I may aid thee. Doubtless thy sorrow is heavy."

"Heavy indeed," answered the despairing man; and, after looking at him in silence, resumed, "I will tell it to thy sympathy, and then — die.

"From my youth I was a student; at length I desired to travel. I travelled, left my paternal house, wandered through all the kingdoms between the four seas, and returned. My father was dead, my mother was dead, — I had done nothing for them. My first grief.

"In my travels I had sought to gain wisdom, to know mankind. I believed I had attained enough to become the leader of others. When the time of mourning was over, I journeyed to offer my

services to the King of Tsi. He rejected them contemptuously: he would not even listen to me. My second grief.

"I had friends both in my own country and abroad. I believed that I might trust in them. Rejected by the king, I turned to them, and found with them, instead of sympathizing friendship, indifference and contempt. My third grief.

"Finally, the saddest of all. I had a son, the first fruit of my youthful marriage; and this son, instead of discharging his filial duties to me, wanders about in the world, and says that he has neither father nor mother.

"All this my soul last night pictured to itself so darkly. 'How,' said I to myself, 'thou wouldst be wise, and lead others to wisdom; thou didst believe thyself raised above the duties of common men, and thou hast been neither a good son nor a good subject; for thou hast done nothing, whether for thy parents, for thy prince, for thy country, or for mankind. Nor hast thou been a good father; for thou hast neglected the education of thy son, and caused him to become a bad man.' All this I said to myself, hated my existence, and betook myself to this solitary place. Let me die."

"Friend," said Kung-Tsee, "not so. The greatest evil of life is to throw life away in despair. That wrong can never be righted. From thy first entrance into existence hast thou been in error. Thou wouldst be a sage, before thou wast a man. Thou shouldst have fulfilled the duties nearest to thee, before seeking those more distant. Hence is all thy misfortune.

"Yet, my friend, think not that all is lost. A holy sentence is written in every human breast, and has been retained through all ages: have faith in that! 'As long as you live, despair not.' Rise, friend! Sorrow shall change to joy. Return to life, and know henceforth its value. Use each moment of it to some good purpose, and thou wilt, instructed by thine own faults, become wise and happy."

Kung-Tsee turned with emotion to his host of young disciples, who all desired to become wise, and said to them, "Learn by another's sorrow."

He ascended his chariot, and it was soon perceived that the company of his followers was diminished by thirteen. They had silently withdrawn, resolving to become *men*, before they aspired to become wise and learned. The intended suicide also manned

himself anew, and tasted, as with youth restored, the inspiring draught of life.

THE DRAGON AND THE STREAM.

When Kung-Tsee was in the kingdom of Tsheu, he visited the celebrated founder of the Tao sect, the philosopher Lao-Kium. The latter received him, reclining on a couch, and scarcely moved, as Kung-Tsee and some of his disciples came before him. "I have heard of you," said he: "they say that you wish to impress upon the men of our time the maxims of ancient kings, sages, and lawgivers; and that you give yourself much trouble on this account. Useless toil! To call back to life those who are no more! The wise man cares only for himself, and for the time in which he lives. If this be favorable to him, he makes use of it; if not, he withdraws to solitude, and lets the world pass as it will. He who has a treasure, shares it not with every one: he keeps and uses it for himself. Do thus, young man, and thou wilt act wisely. Now, thy aspirations are immoderate. What are to us the examples of the ancients?"

Thus spoke Lao-Kium. Kung-Tsee listened attentively; and, when he had withdrawn, his companions asked his opinion of the philosopher. He replied, "I have seen Lao-Kium; but I understand him as little as I do the Dragon.* I know that the fish swims; the beast of the earth walks or creeps: what the Dragon does, I know not. So, too, I know how men catch beasts, fishes, birds; but how the Dragon is to be taken, I have never learned."

Thus speaking, he came to a stream, before which he stood in silent meditation. Then said he, "Observe the running waters! Night and day they run, till they are all united in the great ocean. So is it with us. From the times of Yao and of Shun, the lore of wisdom has come down to us: let us give it to others, that these may impart it to their descendants till the end of time. We have received, we will give, and not join ourselves to those among the wise who live for themselves alone. The little that we can communicate of knowledge and virtue will not impoverish us, yet will make others rich. Let the fabulous Dragon live by and for

* The Dragon is in China the emblem of the highest wisdom and power. A delicate compliment, therefore, was blended with the censure expressed.

himself; but men and their generations are for each other. Think thereon, my friends! We are waves in the stream of the ages."

THE MOURNER.

With two or three of his pupils, Kung-Tsee travelled through the mountains of Tay-Tshan. They heard among the mountains a lamenting voice, and Tsee-Kung was sent to learn the cause of this unhappiness. He returned with this answer:—

"It is the voice of one unfortunate. 'I am,' said she, 'a woman overcome with woe. Three beloved ones have I lost in this desert, — my father-in-law, my husband, and my son. All three were destroyed here by a tiger.'

"And thou venturkest hither?' I said to her. 'Fearest thou not that the tiger may destroy thee? Why dwell in so dangerous a place, among the mountains? Choose another home.'

"'Never,' she replied. 'In the village where I dwell, friendship and compassion reign. They stand by each other, they help each other, and enjoy peace. In the plains, I have heard men are hostile and evil to one other; in the mountains here, they live in unity and happiness. Ah, better to fall into the claws of the tiger than into the hands of evil men! I came hither to bewail the death of my family, to give vent to my sorrow and my tears. Let me weep on! It is pain that breaks from me; no murmur, no complaint, against Heaven.' She turned from me, and — there she sorrows still."

Kung-Tsee, affected, sat still in his chariot. "This unhappy one," said he at length, "should be an example to all sufferers, to mourn without complaining, — to obtain relief by tears, without rebellious murmuring. She has bowed in subjection to the laws of Heaven, and tells us a mournful truth in what she says of tigers and of men. But she speaks also of good men living on these mountains: on, my friends; we will search for them, rejoice in them, and take comfort concerning the men of the plain." Then he proceeded on his way.

THE CAT AND THE MOUSE.

As Kung-Tsee once awoke from his noon-slumber, he took in his hand the instrument Kin, according to his custom, but drew

from it such soft, light, and, as it seemed to his disciples, mournful tones, that they who were in the ante-room supposed him to be sick or in sadness. Tseng-Tsee approached him with a troubled countenance, and informed him of the anxiety of his friends.

"I thank you for your interest in my well-being," said Kung-Tsee, "and also for the attention which you gave to the tones of music. These are not emptily resounding breathings, that for a few moments please the ear, then vanish and leave no trace. They are instruments which engrave upon the soul that which we utter by their means. But set yourselves at ease. My tones were only gentle, not mournful. As I awoke, I saw the cat and a mouse observing each other. I wished to await the result of this observation, and not disturb the two parties. For this reason my tones were so light.

"Is it not true, my friends, that you would never have suspected this cause, if you had not asked me? You would probably have attributed to me some weighty matter that was occupying my mind. Thus it happens in a thousand suppositions in the course of life. Do not trust blindly to them; ascribe not too much to any abstractedness, to any thoughtful mien, which perhaps is but concerned about a cat and a mouse. But in all doubtful cases which trouble you, though perhaps of little consequence in themselves, seek not to penetrate by guesses, but, where the circumstances admit, ask for an explanation."

THE BUCKET.

In the midst of the great court, where anciently the Emperor of Tsheu consulted with his nobles on the welfare of the empire, was a well, and near the throne stood a bucket. As Kung-Tsee went through this ancient palace, he inquired of the Mandarin who showed him its curiosities, what was the purpose of this bucket. "The bucket is called Y," said the ignorantly proud Mandarin, "that is, instrument of forgiveness. The son of Heaven, the Emperor, must be forgiving: that is his first duty."

Kung-Tsee, smiling as well at the explanation as at the statement of political and moral doctrine, went with the bucket to the well. He let it softly down; and as the bucket, made of rushes, was light, it swam upon the surface of the water, and not a drop entered it. "Empty it," said Kung-Tsee to those near him. "Empty it?" said they; "it is empty."

"Then," resumed Kung-Tsee, "we must try another method, if we would have water from the well in this vessel." Forcefully he threw it from the height down into the well. The bucket filled and sunk. "Where is it?" said Kung-Tsee, and looked down, as if he sought it with his eyes. "Thou seekest it in vain," they call to him: "the well is deep, it lies at the dark bottom."

Kung-Tsee then drew up the rush bucket, emptied it, and said, "Now will I show the true way to fill and to use this bucket. Slowly, but strongly, he let it down by the rope to which it hung. The bucket floated in equipoise, half above, half under the water, and became half full. "See," said he to those around, "the emblem of a good government, and of good success in every thing. A prince who takes hold of affairs too lightly, brings nothing to a good result. A magistracy or a domestic government which allows those subjected to it to act according to their own pleasure, — that is the bucket floating on the surface, in which was not a drop of water.

"On the other hand, if one over-hastens and over-drives every thing, if one acts passionately from wrath or other impulses, he does indeed strongly, but destructively. That was the bucket which was thrown down with force into the well: it filled, but sank under. We could not see what had become of it.

"A sovereign, a magistrate, a father, every man finally, who knows how to stand in his place, and who fills it worthily; never too remiss, never too stern, gentle and energetic, requiring that which belongs to him, but requiring it in the most pleasant manner, — he is the half-filled bucket, floating in equipoise. It rested not uselessly upon the waters, nor sunk over-full to the depths. This is the meaning of the bucket made of rushes, near the throne. Anciently, at every accession, the same was done before the new monarch, which I have done now; and thus was he shown the only means of ruling his kingdom happily and well, — the *middle way, moderation*. I have only brought before you an ancient custom. Let each one use it in his own way."

He drew back modestly; the Mandarin confessed himself mistaken; the by-standers applauded Kung-Tsee. He himself made use of this occurrence, and formed thereon his doctrine of morals and of government; he wrote the book Tshong Yong, the Golden Mean. He sank the bucket in equipoise in the waters of truth.

FAITHFUL SERVICE.

When Kung-Tsee came to the borders of the district of Shan-fu, over which his former disciple Ming-Tse presided as Mandarin, he sent U-ma-ki before him to acquaint himself with the condition of the province. U-ma-ki observed a fisherman, who had just drawn in his net, separating the fish he had taken, and throwing many of them back into the stream. "Why dost thou this," asked U-ma-ki, "and renderest useless a part of thy labor?" "Because our Mandarin has directed us to throw back the smaller fishes into the water, that they may become larger. If I had taken nothing but small fish, I would have done the same. My labor must not injure myself."

"Good government," said Kung-Tsee, when he heard this. "Good government where the subject trusts in the ruler, that he commands him only what is good, and where the latter does indeed only thus command. There it is easy to govern; there is obedience rendered with readiness and joy." He turned his chariot, and departed.

S. E. B.

A TRUE SKETCH FROM LIFE.

THE close of a summer's day was drawing near. The hot and sultry air, which during the day had cast itself down upon the earth as if to rest, was gently roused by a soft breeze, that bore upon its bosom the dewy freshness of evening. The scorched flowers raised their drooping heads, and scattered abroad their fragrance as grateful offerings. The low voice of birds, mingling with the din which goes up from men's abode, spoke volumes to that mortal's ear who stopped to listen.

Oh! who would go abroad at such an hour, and not feel that he held communion with heaven?

The gates of paradise were opened; forth issued a radiant being, whose outspread wings, descending earthward, told her to be an angel. Why comes she to earth? Oh! how can she leave her golden harp, the crystal stream, and all those things which God as prepared for those who love him, to visit this abode of change

and death? Perhaps that fair spirit may once have been enclosed in mortality; she may here have spent a life in doing good; and now that hers is a life eternal, she may be permitted to continue her good works.

She has descended to earth: folded are her wings, as she sits by the lonely wayside. Bounding along with the step of health comes a beautiful child, who bears in her hands fresh-gathered flowers. Instinctively she draws near the *invisible one*, and seats herself upon the green turf. Her flowers are strewn about her; and, as she gazes upon their beauty, they become to her a guide, leading her thoughts upward. She thinks of the God who made them; and her mind is filled with childish wonder, that the same Being who formed the lofty mountain and the mighty river should bestow such care upon the little flower. "And he, too, is my Father," she murmurs: "oh that I could know him better, and love him more!" Then the angel cast the shadow of her wings upon the child, and a vow was registered in heaven that henceforth she would be to her a guardian spirit, leading her in the way of truth.

Time passed on. Sickness had stricken down that beautiful child; her cheek was no longer radiant with health; and the expression of anguish, which often came over her mild face, told plainly that hers were days and nights of suffering. Those who loved her looked upon her, and shed tears of pity. But how was it with the sweet child? Did she feel her narrow couch to be to her a prison? Was she there chained, shut out from the enjoyment of the bright earth? Did she feel, when withering under the severest sufferings of which her nature was capable, that the God of flowers was no longer her Father? Oh, no! It was true she could no longer go forth into the open air; but there was yet to her beauty in life. From her window she could sometimes catch glimpses of the sky, the far-stretching hills, and the flowing river; and these glimpses disclosed to her vision more visibly, "freshly uttered words from God," than did the whole volume of nature, opened wide, to the worldly multitude. But far more than all this, she had learned to look into the depths of her own immortal soul, and had there found sources of communion with the spirit-land, which the world can neither give nor take away. True, pain and suffering was her portion; but by it she had been taught to feel that there are times when help cannot

come from mortals like ourselves, and she had turned to her heavenly Father, submissively casting herself into his arms; and when breathing the prayer of her divine Master, "Thy will be done," she felt an angel strengthening her. Years passed by, and still this child of mortality lived on. It was not for mortal to know fully the deep and hidden lessons which her sufferings taught her; but all who knew her — those who ministered to her daily wants — felt she was to them as the bruised flower which sheds abroad its fragrance, purifying the atmosphere which nourishes it.

It was evening. The snows of winter lay upon the earth. High in the heavens the moon sent forth her pale rays, and the bleak north wind whistled mournfully through the branches of the unclothed trees. Oh! how unlike a summer night, yet as audibly was proclaimed to the listening ear, "The hand that made us is divine," and as significant to the heart of man was the lesson taught. Soon the warm rays of the bright sun would dissolve the snow that covered the earth's surface, and its elements would sink deep into the earth's bosom, refreshing and fertilizing, causing it to bring forth abundantly. So may it not be, that human suffering contains within it elements which purify and strengthen, and it needs only to have the heart open to the rays of the great *spiritual sun*, to have them diffused into its utmost depths?

Such was the hour when once more came the angel to earth. Hers had ever been visits of mercy; and now she came to soothe the dying. The gentle being to whom she had ever been a ministering spirit was fast passing away from earth. Heavily came her breath, and there seemed a fearful struggle. She knew she was dying; but as she felt the bright wings of the angel fan her brow, and heard soft whisperings of the glorious land where angels dwell, she had but *one* thought of earth, — that thought was for the loved ones she left: long and wistful was the look she gave them as they gathered round her; and as she sank upon her pillow, murmuring, "Good bye, mother," a voice came unto her saying, "Come nearer to me." Then the angel breathed upon her, and quickly were dissolved the "links which chain the spirit from its rare element," and it was gone.

Who can say the child lived and suffered in vain?

L.

THE SPIRIT'S NEED.

WHAT is companionship for man ?
 And what is solitude ?
 A throng may press thee round about,
 And many a jostle rude,
 And many a clashing of the wheels
 May come, reminding thee
 That other fleshly vehicles
 Are bearing ceaselessly
 Their spirit-tenants, like thine own,
 Close at thy very side, —
 And yet thou mayst be all alone
 Amid that rushing tide.

How knowest thou the thoughts that stir
 In any human heart,
 Although its pulses to thine own
 Thrill as a counterpart ?
 Thou feelest on thy cheek the breath
 That feeds a life like thine ;
 Perchance affection's loving arms
 May softly round thee twine :
 Yet nearer thou canst never come ;
 The spirit hideth still
 Mysteriously her secret life,
 Pursue it as we will.

Though speech may strive to tell again
 The wordless thoughts that rise,
 And crowd impulsive to the lips,
 And beam from out the eyes ;
 Though we may penetrate the courts,
 The outer courts of mind,
 Still, shrouded by a mystic veil,
 The holiest is behind.

Alone, with God the Giver, dwells
 Each single human soul, —
 Like the far ocean, where the tides
 Unwatched, unheeded, roll,

Save by the eye of that calm heaven
That stretcheth out above,
And gathereth the earth and sea
In its embrace of love.

Like the lone gem that lieth deep
And darkling in the mine ;
Like mystic fire that burneth
Upon a secret shrine, —
The deep things of the longing heart,
Its love, its hope, its doubt,
Unknown to mortal sympathies,
God only searcheth out.

His silent Spirit moveth
On that ever-restless deep,
His word of Power alone can still
Its billows into sleep.
He marks the jewel mid the dross
That crusteth it from sight ;
And, buried though it be from men,
He visits it with light !

The subtle influence of ill, —
The tendency, desire,
That gathers, like a mist of earth,
And dims the altar-fire, —
Only His eye of love may pierce,
His breath can roll away,
And bid the sun of righteousness
Beam forth to perfect day.

Yet human weakness longs to lean
On human sympathy, —
On love that hath been touched with all
Its own infirmity.
And God, to fill this very need,
Hath come to us by One
Divinely, — yet a brother born,
His well-beloved Son !

A chosen Priest to raise the veil,
Empowered to enter in;
With heaven's own pitying grace to meet
Our loneliness and sin.
With His own pure Baptism of Fire
To kindle and to cherish,
Once more, upon that inner shrine,
The light about to perish.

Oh, love beyond our highest thought!
That stoops to earthly strife,
And veileth such a Majesty
Within a mortal life!
God bows the heavens, — He bendeth down,
His glory lays apart, —
That, in a Saviour, He may come
Nearer the human heart!

A. D.

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS.*

AMID the solemnities of Easter, if one reflects on the occasion of this annual festival, the event which it commemorates, and the consequences of that event, he will be filled with gratitude and awe at the far-seeing goodness of God. Still more will this be so, if he considers well the condition of the world at the time of Christ's coming, and sees how great was the need of such a teacher. In the decay of Grecian and Roman arts, — then already perceptible, — the world was beginning to lose the light of that philosophy which had been its guide; and the teachings of Zeno and Socrates and Plato were less and less heeded. But here and there a man arose who still cherished these pure principles, which come often so near to the Christian standard; and it is of one of these that we propose to speak.

Marcus Aurelius was born at Rome, A.D. 121, in the reign of Adrian. On the death of Antoninus Pius, his father by adoption, he became emperor, A.D. 161, and continued to reign till

* "The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Translated from the Greek. Glasgow, 1749."

his death, which happened in the fifty-ninth year of his age, A.D. 179. His reign was marked by vigorous management abroad, and a just administration at home, and he died beloved by all his subjects. No emperor, indeed, ever deserved the love of his people better; for in all his actions he seems to have been guided by a sincere love of justice, and an earnest desire to do all things for the good of the people and the approval of Heaven. Amid the corruption of his age, he stands almost alone in his pure and noble virtue. In speaking of him, the calm and sceptical Gibbon rises almost to enthusiasm. He says: —

“The united reigns of the Antonines are perhaps the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government. . . . The virtue of Marcus Aurelius was of a severer and more laborious kind than that of Antoninus Pius. His life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfections of others, just and beneficent to all mankind. War he detested as the disgrace and calamity of human nature; but, when the necessity of a just defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the banks of the Danube, the severity of which at last proved fatal to the weakness of his constitution. Such princes deserved the honor of restoring the republic, had the Romans of that day been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.” — *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. chap. 8.

Marcus Aurelius left a volume of *Meditations*, — short sentences on moral and religious topics, — which has justly been regarded as one of the best fruits of the school of Zeno. It seemed that the theories of the Greek needed to be embodied in the earnest and thoughtful life of the sturdy Roman, before their whole beauty could be seen. From this book of his we make some selections.

As a specimen of his manner and his style of thought, take this passage, beautiful for the tribute of love and reverence which he here pays to his adopted father: —

“Endeavor earnestly to continue such as philosophy requires you to be. Reverence the gods, and support the interests of mankind. Life is short; the sole enjoyment of this terrestrial life is in the purity and holiness of our dispositions, and in kind actions.

Act as it becomes the scholar of Antoninus Pius. Imitate his constant, resolute tenor of natural actions; his equability on all occasions; his sanctity, his serenity of countenance, his sweetness of temper, his contempt of vain-glory, and his close attention in examining every thing. Remember how he bore those who accused him unjustly, without making any angry returns; how he was ever calm, without hurry; how he discouraged accusations; how cautious he was of reproaching any; how free from fear, suspicion, and sophistry; how patient he was of labor; how hard to be provoked; how steadfast and even in his conduct to his friends, how patient of their opposition to his sentiments, and how joyfully he received any better information from them; how religious he was, without superstitious dread. And so may the hour of death come upon you, well aware of it and prepared to meet it, as it did upon him!" — Book vi. 30.

Similar to this conclusion is what he says elsewhere: —

"Pass this short moment of life according to nature, and depart contented, as a full ripe olive falls of its own accord, applauding the earth whence it sprung, and thankful to the tree that bore it." — Book iv. 48.

Of the mutual dependence of all things on each other, he says, with the highest truth: —

"All things are linked to each other and bound together with a sacred bond; scarce is there any thing quite foreign to another. There is one orderly, graceful disposition of the whole; there is one God in the whole." — Book vii. 9.

And again: —

"Whatever happens to any one is profitable to the whole. What is not to the interest of the hive is not to the interest of the bee."

He speaks thus of the duty of early rising: —

"When you find yourself of a morning averse to rise, have this thought at hand: 'I rise to the proper business of a man; and shall I be averse to set about that work for which I was born, and brought into the universe?' Have I this constitution and furniture of soul granted me by nature, that I may lie among bed-clothes, and keep myself warm? But you say, 'This state is pleasanter.' Were you, then, formed for pleasure, and not at all for action and exercising your powers?" — Book v. 1.

"The Pythagoreans recommended to us, in the morning, to view the heavens, to put us in mind of beings which constantly go on executing their proper work, and of order and beauty and naked simplicity; for no star hath a veil." — Book xi. 27.

He says much and well of the duty of loving mankind, even those who injure us; and here his precepts nearly resemble the teachings of our Saviour. Take the following extracts for an example: —

"The best sort of revenge is, not to become like the injurious. Delight thyself in this one thing, and rest in it: to be going from one kind, social action to another, with remembrance of God." — Book v. 6.

"'Tis the part of a man to love even those who offend him; and this we may do, if we would reflect that those who offend are our kindred by nature; that they offend through ignorance and unwillingly; and that in a little while we and they must die; and, especially, that they have done thee no harm; for they cannot make thy soul any worse than it was before." — Book vii. 22.

He has many beautiful sayings concerning the inward light, — the consciousness and inner life of man. We quote what he says of the certainty of the existence of the gods; an argument which always holds good: —

"To those who ask, 'Where have you seen these gods, or whence are you assured of their existence, that you thus worship them?' say this, 'My own soul I cannot see, and yet I reverence it; and thus, too, as I experience continually the power of the gods, I both know surely that they *are*, and worship them.'" — Book xii. 28.

"Look inward: within is the fountain of good, which is ever springing up if you be ever digging for it." — Book vii. 59.

But the fairest gem of this string of pearls, — for such does this book of Meditations seem to us, so pure and precious are they, — we have reserved till the last. I think few Christians have expressed their entire trust in God, their sure faith that he will bring no evil on the children of his love, and their patience under all trials and amid all disappointments of hope and endeavor, with more beautiful simplicity than our noble stoic: —

"Whatever is agreeable to thee shall be agreeable to me, O graceful Universe! Nothing shall be to me too early or too late, which is seasonable to thee. Whatever thy seasons bear shall be joyful fruits to me, O Nature! From thee are all things, in thee are all things, to thee they all return. Could one say, 'Thou dearly beloved city of Cecrops,' and wilt thou not say, 'Thou dearly beloved city of God?'" — Book iv. 23.

Is not this sentiment worthy the "golden-tongued Chrysostom," or the holy Augustine — he who wrote those words of comfort, "God is patient because he is eternal," — or any of the Christian Fathers? Surely such lessons cheer and strengthen and tranquillize the soul, whether one reads them from the time-stained pages of Antoninus, or, better, hears them, as we have been permitted to do, from the lips of one who has himself deeply felt their truth, and whose sweetest poetry has been devoted to the same worthy and hallowed purpose.*

And though the "good Marcus" lived and died believing in the "fair humanities of old religion," we must still admire and reverence him as one who was, in many things, more Christian than Christians.

F.

UNDER A CLOUD.

SOME people always live under a cloud. They will not permit the bright sunshine of God's favors to penetrate and warm their souls. They are filled with small anxieties: no sooner do they loose their hold upon one petty vexation, but straightway another rises. Such people always have a cogent reason for their unhappiness. Their domestic trials, to them, wear a *peculiar* aspect. They look abroad, and nobody is troubled in like manner with themselves. Their neighbors seem to have no vexations; systematic, orderly arrangements give *them* time to do all they desire. — Stop a moment, my friend; did you ever step into another's thoughts,

* We hope we commit no impropriety in thus alluding to him from whom we learned to know Marcus Aurelius, and whose possession and perusal had consecrated the volumes in which we first read the *Meditations*. His name has long been the pride of our literature, and the thanks of an obscure student can add little to the established fame of LONGFELLOW.

and learn their conflicts and their triumphs? It may be, if such a mirror were given you but for a day, you would gladly return to your former self.

There is a patient endurance which comes only from a Christian trust. Thorns may beset the pathway of such a believer; a hedge may even render the way to some wishes impassable; there may be secret griefs, fearful disquietudes: but there is one place and one Being to whom a reference is made in all such perplexities; a mercy-seat where the soul can pour out all its trials, and by seeking comfort there, it finds it. There is a placid expression upon that brow, there is an energy which yields to no discouragement; for the soul is so buoyed up by its internal strength, that it looks beyond the present speck of our finite existence into the infinite, where it receives a full recompense for its short struggle with the frailty of to-day. It is only when we lose sight of the future, that the present so disturbs us. Could we but ever bear about with us a consciousness that our vexations and disquietudes, it may be, are intentional discipline for a higher order of excellence, for a brighter manifestation of the Christian character, we should not yield so readily to those debasing influences which narrow our vision, and limit our happiness to an earthly span. It may be a difficult acquisition, but it is a blessed experience to rise out of the foggy atmosphere of daily trials into the sunshine of an undisturbed peace with one's self, and the ordering of things about us. No matter how hard the struggle, if we but attain the victory: the succeeding tranquillity makes ample amends for all previous sacrifices. To feel a perfect resignation to all our changes of condition; to be willing to endure the storm, to live for a time under the cloud, and yet, in the end, to rise into a perpetual sunshine, — who would count the cost for such an attainment?

Strive — that is the motto which should be for ever suspended before us; and we may be assured we shall not be unaided in the contest. Not a sigh or prayer, not an effort or conflict with temptation, but is kept in the book of remembrance; and happy are all those who, through "much tribulation," are permitted to enter the kingdom; since what costs us a severe struggle is all the more prized when fully attained.

H. S. E.

WHAT HAVE THEY SEEN IN THINE HOUSE?

A SERMON, BY REV. F. T. GRAY.*

2 KINGS XX. 15: "What have they seen in thine house?"

IN the interest and solemnity of this passing hour, there is a voice addressing us, in the silence of our souls, more eloquent and touching than any which can come from mortal lips. How solemn and impressive are the thoughts and feelings awakened, as memory now unrolls to many of us her record of the past, and brings so visibly to mind what we have seen in this house of prayer! Especially is it thus, as we remember that it is the last time we shall meet together to unite in worship in this revered sanctuary.

It is as a Christian family, as Christian worshippers, and as Christian friends and kindred, that we delight to contemplate an hour like this, when we have come to take our farewell of this house of our fathers. And it is in strict accordance with this feeling and Christian sympathy that I am now permitted to unite with you in these farewell services! Not as a stranger am I here, but as one of your own number; one who claims close affinity to you, — one, the name of whose ancestor appears on your dial; † an ancestor who, four generations back, on the first settlement of this town, when the Indian roamed here unmolested, came in company with others, and built his low log-cabin! one, too, whose kindred on the paternal side ministered at this altar, and dwelt among you for more than half a century.

How oft, in the days of early childhood, have I sat by the side of the venerable Christian mother, and, as I listened to the ministrations of her son, has my heart been touched, and feelings of reverence been awakened that were delightful and profitable to my young spirit, such as I have ever loved to recall and dwell upon in after-time, in the hours of serious meditation! Well, therefore, may I say, that I love this habitation of our God, and this temple where his honor dwelleth; for my ancestors and kindred have long worshipped in this place. Its interests, there-

* Preached upon the removal of the Old Meeting House, in Jamaica Plain, Sunday, March 19, 1853.

† John Morey — born in Roxbury, 1687 — presented the clock in 1771.

fore, are identified with much that is holy and venerable in my thoughts; hallowed by the tender recollections of childhood, the happier days of youth, and the still more sobered thoughts and meditations of maturer years.

It is such a one who has now come to mingle his prayers with yours; who, with the many pleasant memories which cluster about this time-hallowed spot, would gather up a few thoughts from the many that crowd upon his mind, and present the lessons which they are calculated to impart, as we now recall what we have seen in this house.

It is only a few thoughts I shall attempt to present; for these are all that my time has allowed me to gather, and all you will expect after the full and appropriate discourse from your pastor this morning.

And now let me ask, what have we seen in this house which awakens so much interest, and which has called so many here to-day?

I. There are those among you—a few, a very few—upon whose heads time has shed its snows, whose impress of years reminds us that you were permitted to see this house in its earlier days, and who long years since came up hither to worship. How with the eye of memory you can now fill these seats with those venerable men and women as they appeared in olden time! How you can see those fathers who year after year came hither, morning and evening, to the worship of their God! How, too, for scores of years, these seats were filled with the same families, known to all, and among whom a single change in one of them was a marked event! How long too, did the same dwellings, the same people, the same quiet, prevail in this pleasant village on the plain!

Time rolled on, and one after another of these earlier worshippers you have missed from their accustomed seats, until nearly all have joined the congregation of the dead. What changes you have noticed in all this period! how many sad thoughts does the remembrance of them awaken! You now feel that you alone are left to tell the story of those former days. As you bring that generation before your minds, what a contrast is presented in their appearance to that which now meets your view! As you ask, "Our fathers, where are they?" you have only the brief answer, They have nearly all passed away!

The simple manners, the humble dwellings, the almost rustic simplicity, as you have seen them here in days of yore, — how singular they now seem. It was at this early period that this house appeared as originally erected, "with its thirty-four pews only, and three long seats for the poor."

II. Again. Years rolled on, and another generation appears; and with it comes that growth and improvement which many with us to-day have witnessed. With this increase, the number of worshippers increased; and the building, accordingly, was enlarged and improved as it now appears. New families were seen here, and the children soon occupied the places of their fathers. How bright and pleasant were those days! Union, harmony, and peace prevailed; and he who had ministered a quarter of a century was in his prime, and the people of his flock were his pride and his joy. As this increase and interest in this society were witnessed, corresponding improvements around gradually appeared. A new bell now called the people to worship. A new hall near by was erected, and lectures were commenced. The garden of graves was enlarged and greatly improved, and many loved to go there and plant sweet flowers near the last earthly resting-place of loved and cherished kindred! While this was going on without, within the large and goodly choir was somewhat reduced to make room for yon organ, whose sweet notes were first brought out by one of your own children, who fondly loved his Father's house, and every thing connected with it. With what patience and constancy did he come from the city to cheer and gladden many hearts, as he brought forth its richest notes in strains that we loved to hear! The same taste that arranged the flowers and trained the vines in yonder cemetery, whither he loved to go and meditate with the departed, we found as we came up hither fell on our ears in that organ's sweetest tones! And while thus he was meekly and quietly doing so much for others, and preparing the last resting-place for his feeble frame, how sweet was his smile, how gentle his manner, how delightful his intercourse with those who knew and loved him here! Gentle spirit! early wast thou called; and those who knew thee best felt that thou wast not made to dwell long on earth, and encounter life's rough and thorny ways. Thy spirit and thy thought bore the impress and the peace of heaven! *

* Thomas Gray, jun., died March 6, 1849.

And now the period had come when the village had greatly increased, and dwellings were rising up on every side, till its former quiet was changed for continuous passing, and the house of worship was filled with large and intelligent audiences with every returning sabbath.

It was at this period that he who had ministered here for more than forty years had one very near to him united with him as his colleague; and you were permitted to see the father, and one as dear to him as a child, laboring together among a people united and happy in the ministrations of both.

But a few years only passed, when there came a change. Bright hopes were sadly disappointed in the departure of the early called! The younger pastor in his prime, when all hearts were closely bound to him, was suddenly taken from his labors among you. Ah! how wide and deep was the grief at his loss! how sad this dark dispensation of Providence! But here I cannot dwell: the crowd of thoughts that rush upon my mind, as I recall that event, awaken emotions that forbid their utterance.*

A few years more pass on, when he who had been with you in the varied scenes of life, — whose delight it was to visit among you, and preach the word of truth, — was called to follow the son and colleague, and you were left without a shepherd. Ah! how vividly present to our minds, even now, are those days of mourning, when we came up hither with the multitude, and united in the solemn services, and took our farewell look of those who were then sleeping in death at the foot of the same altar where so many had loved to see and to hear them!

In the period of time in which the events I have mentioned transpired, how many years of happy sabbath-days were many among you permitted to spend within these sacred walls! But, as I recall that period, I cannot but be reminded what changes in this space we have witnessed here.

To-day we see not those who were so deeply interested and engaged here but a quarter of a century ago. Those well-known names, those familiar faces of old friends, we see them not in yonder choir, who for so many years led in that delightful part of worship; all of whom were greatly respected among you. †

* Rev. George Whitney, deceased.

† An account of the number of years that some prominent persons were members of that choir would be exceedingly interesting. I have been

Those young men and maidens, also, whom we so often saw there years ago, you see not to-day. No, they are gone!

The Sunday-school children, too, who assembled around this altar, were not led hither to-day by that faithful and devoted teacher * who so long and cheerfully toiled and labored in that holy work. No, she has gone to her reward, — she whom we so loved to see, and whose delight it was to instruct the young from the word of God. She and others of her faithful companions are not here to-day! They who did so

“Meekly forfeit to their mission kind
The rest of earthly sabbaths, — be their gain
A sabbath without end, 'mid yon celestial plain.”

Again. You have seen the table of communion here spread, and the company of believers assembled in grateful remembrance of their Lord. You now look, but how many of those aged Christians are missing! How changed is that little band!

You have seen parents and children standing at this altar, and the solemn rite administered, as the holy seal of baptism was impressed on the infant and the adult brow! You turn and look around to-day, and behold parents and children are many, many of them gone! As you behold all this, you are ready to say, —

“We are not all here :
Many are wanting — the dead ones dear ;
Some like a night-flash passed away,
And some sank, lingering day by day :
Yon quiet grave-yard — some lie there,
And cruel ocean has his share.

We're not all here.”

informed that Mr. John Keyes was the first chorister, in 1771. He was succeeded by Mr. Stephen Child, in 1778, who retained the office of leader till 1815, — thirty-seven years. “Mr. Child was the life and support of the singing for forty years, and was a warm and devoted friend to the society.” Mr. Benjamin P. Williams became a member of the choir in 1803, and succeeded Mr. Child as leader in 1815. He retained that office till his decease, which took place on the evening of Lord's day, Sept. 15, 1844, aged fifty-seven years. Forty years was Mr. Williams seen in those seats. On the last sabbath, he was at church all day, and walked two miles in the early part of the evening to attend a meeting of the choir. He walked home, and, without any premonition, died soon after of disease of the heart. Few men were more respected than this upright, excellent man. His sister, Miss Lucretia Williams, was a member of the choir about twenty-five years.

• Miss Lucretia Williams, a warm and devoted friend to the school from its formation in May, 1829, to her decease, March 1, 1851, thirty-two years.

Once more you turn and look towards this sacred desk, and here many of you have seen for long years the kind pastor and affectionate friend, who always greeted you with a smile and a cordial welcome! To many of you, doubtless, he seems even now present to your spiritual vision, and the familiar tones of his voice you almost seem to hear whenever you are called to enter this house, as you were wont in the days of childhood and youth, as well as in later years. How closely is he associated in our minds with this loved sanctuary!

And then, too, you saw here the young colleague, and listened with so much delight to his instruction. How does the sight of the venerable father and the young and active son stand vividly before you, even now! Beautiful sight, — two beloved and faithful shepherds standing side by side, surrounded by a happy and united flock!

“Sweet shall the song of glory swell,
Spirit divine, to thee,
When they whose work is finished well
In thy own courts of rest shall dwell,
Blest through eternity.”

These were succeeded by another faithful and devoted one, who spoke and acted in the fulness and frankness of his young and confiding heart. Earnest, true, and sincere did he enter upon his duties in this field; and many here will ever kindly remember him. Though his stay among you was short, it was long enough to win for him many friends here; and in later time, in his labors elsewhere, he has gained a position which few of his years attain. I know I but utter the feelings of many hearts, and from them I shall find a warm response, when I say, — May the richest of Heaven’s blessings rest upon that young and devoted servant of Christ! *

These and many others you have seen standing in this sacred place, and from them received the word of truth. How readily and gratefully you can now recall the word which some of them have here spoken! How indelibly impressed on your memories are many of the truths you here received! They will long be remembered, and cheer and solace you in many of life’s lonely hours. How often in the hour of sorrow have you here found comfort! How often, too, amid the temptations and trials of life, have you here been strengthened and sustained! — and in the

• Rev. Joseph H. Allen.

season of joy and prosperity, as you engaged in prayer, and listened to the preached word, how has your heart been drawn in gratitude to the Giver of all good, and your affections gently weaned from too strong an attachment to earth, and fixed more strongly on heaven and heavenly things! God grant that you may recall those truths to-day, and find them ever exerting over you a hallowing and salutary influence and power.

But I hear some say, — "Yes, and we have seen, too, the worldly man, the man of care and toil, sitting here, from whose apparently listless and drowsy manner you could form no hope that any of this good which you have named was derived by him." Ah! I know well what you mean; but I rejoice in the knowledge that God's truth has not been spoken here wholly in vain. To go beneath that apparent listless manner was not for you: that truth was designed to enter where no mortal eye can penetrate; where no human being can see and know its secret workings. 'Tis the Omniscient eye alone which can penetrate there, and it is the truth of Omnipotence that can sink deep even there, and mould the character to excellence, virtue, goodness, and truth, when you knew it not!

Hence many such, led hither in life's early years sabbath after sabbath, and who have long been seen constantly in their accustomed seats, may have received much of truth into kind and honest hearts amid all this, to you apparent outward indifference. In calm meditation, the deep oppressed penitent soul may have received, and found it influencing and affecting the character far beyond any conception or thought you were able to form.

And is not this much, very much? Blessed is that truth thus dispensed and received, and blessed are those in whose lives and characters this sincerity, uprightness, and integrity has been thus awakened and thus exemplified!

While, then, as we would fain believe, many humble and devout minds have here found light, peace, and solace in worship and communion, to whom this has been indeed the house of prayer, let us not forget our ignorance and blindness. We can see but a little way, and the arrows of conviction that aroused to penitence and newness of life cannot be discerned by us, neither where they fall, nor whom they reached; neither can we know who are the instruments selected to do this great work by Him "who doeth all things well." No, this is one of those things

in which we may well say, "God seeth not as man seeth," or, as in the words of the apostle, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord," and not in man's thoughts or man's opinions!

So then as ye look to-day at this sacred desk, from which so long the word of God has been proclaimed, though you may not be able to say what it has wrought out or effected; though you cannot cast it up and count it by numbers, and tell the certain result; yet Christian faith bids us believe that it has done much in forming and influencing the lives and characters of many, who have found it an ark of safety amid the temptations of life, the place of instruction, and the house of prayer! And many now, I doubt not, in far-off distant places, who were led hither in the days of childhood and youth, as they recall the pleasant sabbaths which they passed here, are ready to say, "Truly we love the habitation of the Lord," as they remember what they have seen and heard within these venerable walls!

III. Having dwelt so long upon what we have seen here, let us now consider the lessons which this brief review of the past brings to us at this hour.

The great purpose for which you assembled here was to worship God, and so to engage in those services, that the spirit of devotion might be kindled within you, and awaken such a deep and strong love to God and to Christ, that it should manifest itself in that love to man which was witnessed in the life of the Saviour. Hence it is, that, as you here drew near to God, you have felt that he was ready to draw nigh to you, and was ready also to listen to your prayer of penitence, your humble tribute of gratitude, your devout song of praise. Hither you have come, and, laying aside your worldly cares, you have lifted your thoughts and hearts to heaven. Here, separating yourselves from the objects of the senses, you have looked unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, and have meditated upon the sublime truths which faith in him discloses. If the spirit of true devotion has dwelt within you, as you drew nigh to the Searcher of hearts, then you can well understand why this is called the gate of heaven; for the peace and joy of heaven have come within you in answer to your prayer!

But if it has not been thus, and you understand me not, oh ! seek then to know and feel the object and importance of worship, and aim in future to gain the benefit and the blessing you may thus derive and enjoy from worship and prayer in the sanctuary.

If you have improved this privilege, and have here held sweet communion with your Maker, your Saviour, and the loved friends and kindred who have passed to mansions on high, how many cheering and delightful views does our holy religion present and permit you to cherish ; for it reveals to us the truth, that the Christian friends we have so often seen in this venerable house of God, who have united with us in the songs of Zion, though we see them not, yet we may think of them as calling upon us to prepare ourselves to unite in the higher and holier services of the redeemed in heaven !

And if this spirit of devotion and love is ours, how in life's last hours shall we welcome the messenger who will bear our spirits upward to rejoin those with whom we have delighted to unite in praising God in these courts below ! In that hour, there will be with us no fear in death ; bright, happy spirits will seem to be near us, sustaining and bearing us on ; the smile of those we so loved, and the benignant smile of our Saviour, will beam on us, bearing peace to our spirits, and enabling us to understand and realize, how when to live it is Christ, to die is gain, unutterable gain ! We may then feel that death is simply but the closing of our eyes on friends below, to open them and behold the friends of Jesus in heaven !

I feel, as I stand in this consecrated place to-day, that this, my hearers, is truth, recorded truth ! The good shall meet again ! The devout worshippers on earth, though separated for a time, shall rejoice together in heaven, and go on reunited in their progress towards happiness and heaven, —

“To wave their palms and wear their crown,
And with the elders cast them down.”

Let us cherish and live up to this high, this heaven-revealed truth of our holy religion, so that, though we may meet no more on earth, we may be prepared to serve and worship acceptably in that building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

And now, my friends, the time has come for me to say farewell! Farewell to this loved house of our fathers, and our fathers' God! Dear and precious hast thou been to us!—hallowed by the most revered and sacred associations. Thou mayst pass away from our sight; and thy humble spire, so eloquent to our hearts, may fall and crumble to the dust; but thine image will ever dwell fresh in our memories, and be safely enshrined there in living brightness, wherever we may go, and wherever we may dwell. Thy work here is done, and our last hymn and prayer within thy walls will soon be offered!

May the heavenly truths we have heard, the holy purposes and the solemn vows that have been awakened, be often remembered, and, in tender recollection, often rise upon our minds, awaking our spirits to a deeper sense of their immortal nature, and arousing and quickening us to the higher and nobler duties of immortal beings!

My hearers, bear with me yet a moment in a parting word, ere I close. Interested as I am, and those too who are near and dear to me, in all that pertains to your spiritual happiness and prosperity, I cannot but give utterance to those feelings of gratitude which arise at this moment, for all your kindness manifested in so many ways in the years that are gone, and express the hope for your continued prosperity and peace. I know not how to express this more appropriately than by quoting the words of your former venerated pastor, which he delivered from this sacred desk when he closed his half-century sermon. "Brethren," said he, "may Almighty God, even the God of our fathers, bless you and grant you everlasting welfare! May your souls improve under the means of religious instruction he may grant you! And, when you die, may you be presented without spot before the face of God!"

Let me bless you yet again. Peace be to your families and children, to your habitations, and to all that you hold dear! And whether the remainder of my days on earth be longer or shorter, this will be my final parting counsel, and this the last prayer that breathes from my quivering lips, "Live in peace, and may the God of love and peace be ever with you!" *Amen.*

THE COUNTRY PARISH.

"Vacant heart and hand and eye,
Easy live, and quiet die." — SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"They loved each other; and they loved
Jehovah and their neighbor,
And did not strive to shun their lot
Of never-ending labor." — JAMES KENNARD.

"He is going to take a country parish, is he?" exclaimed an aged uncle of a favorite nephew. "Well, thousands have been spent upon his education, and thousands more upon his travels since; and if, after all that Europe and America have done for him, he will settle down in that contemptible country village, with two hundred dollars for a salary, why, let him. He may starve, for all the help I'll give him."

Not quite so outrageous were his clerical brethren; but they still turned a somewhat cold shoulder on one who *rated* himself so low; and when, after preaching for six months without aid, and writing two sermons every week, he ventured to ask for assistance, one had already arranged his exchanges for three months to come, another thought it too far from home, and the third, a man of fervor too, insisted that it was too early in the season for a country exchange.

Poor James Haviland! Exchanges there were, doubtless, that he might have had; but his flock were in just that condition, that they demanded the best religious influences of the day, and he dared not run the risk. From the most intelligent and gifted of his brethren, he had hoped for the widest sympathy; but how was he disappointed! It was in the eye of the oppressed and careworn pastor of a parish like his own, that he detected the first sign of emotion.

"My brother!" said the aged man, "I could wish that talents and earnestness like yours were more favorably placed. My own labors have been humbly pursued for thirty years, under the constant pressure of ill health. I have added but twenty to my church in that period, and a single leaf contains my whole register of baptisms. When I first took this post, I was confident of the sympathy of my brethren; but my exchanges have been confined to one or two ministers, the least desirable preachers in the

county, whose parishes touched mine. I have barely held my own; and had I, since the day of my settlement, seen a single young man, willing and able to bear my responsibility better, I should have resigned my pulpit. In the meantime, my people have slept under my preaching, while I have prayed over them." The old man's voice quivered with emotion, and I could not forbear pressing his hand to my lips, as I took the young preacher's arm and walked away. James Haviland was my schoolmate. He was younger than I at the beginning; but many years of care and sickness had done their work on me, before he came forward into life; and when he assumed the charge of a little country parish, I was the only friend who manifested much interest in the undertaking. As I saw him scarcely able to sustain himself under it, an almost maternal solicitude thrilled through me, and I watched the deepening color which succeeded his conversation with the old pastor, with painful anxiety.

"James," said I, at length, "I should like to know from whence arises this indifference to the fate of country parishes. It seems to me, after all, that there is no position in the world so worthy of the disciple of Christ, as that of the country pastor. The city is reinforced from the country, year after year; and the character of the young men who leave it, is chiefly of his forming. No man here is so insulated by his prosperity, that his heart does not thrill to your appeal. No woman here is so absorbed by fashion, that you dare not speak to her of death and the salvation of her soul. Beside this, you are the natural guardian of the town-schools. The children look to you, to confirm every privilege they claim. The teacher is sure of your sympathy, when that of the committee fails her. The taste of the rising generation is determined in a great measure by the books which you select for the parish library, and the lecturers which you introduce to their Lyceum. Here, where there are few newspapers and fewer books, — where women are absorbed in their domestic cares, and men in the state of the weather, you are, in fact, the only channel through which the world's current of moral or intellectual life sets in toward your people. The whole of Europe might be convulsed with strife, desolated by famine, or wonder-struck at some great advance in science or art; and who beside yourself, and one or two, not natives of the place, would be disturbed thereby?"

"I would rather not dwell on the why, dear Margaret," he replied; "but I do suppose that very few denizens of a city know the value of a living voice to a place like this. It was not intentionally, I am sure, that the brethren withdrew from intercourse with the noble old man we have just left. They did not realize how fully capable his people were of relishing the best preaching, how close would be their criticisms, and how vivid their interest when spoken to with power. They did not consider their influence with the young men of his Society; for in cities they are almost an unattainable class. Still farther, Margie, they forget how little harm it does a wealthy congregation in the city to listen to dull preaching half a dozen times a year. They hear the foolish comments of their young, and the uncharitable objections of their old parishioners; and they do not realize that the able sermons they might have preached to a country audience would have lived in the memory of tender women and active men for years. To the country parish, the strong preacher comes like a prophet; to the city congregation, his is but one among a thousand influences, the dimmest oftentimes of a dozen dim voices. There are no critics like those of a remote country parish. It was but yesterday that an old man said to me, shaking his head, 'You are not equal, young man, you are not equal. Sometimes the spirit of the Lord is upon you, and I glow while I listen. Again, you feebly drag yourself through the service, and I have hard work to keep awake, after hard work afield.' On that gray rock," continued James, raising his hand, — 'on that gray rock, fringed with birches and red with mosses and sunlight, George Whitefield often preached. It is within a few rods of our old church; and many of those who now sit under its roof on the sabbath can give you powerful abstracts of his discourses, which tradition has handed down to them, containing, as they reverently believe, the 'meat and meaning' of gospel warning. Mine be an immortality like that!" he added, his eyes kindling, "to live in the hearts of men, saving and purifying them. It is the destiny of a Christ alone." "No, Margaret," he resumed, after a pause of some feeling, "I would the brethren knew the truth; but it is not a voice from a country parish that can convince them of it. Let me tell you rather, why it is that I see the matter differently, and will use to the last my failing strength. When I was a little boy, a visitor at my father's house spoke in terms of ridicule

of the condition of a country church, which he had just visited to accommodate a family connection. 'As to the music,' said he, 'I could hear nothing but the shrieks of a dismal clarionet. At the conclusion of my prayer, a dozen of the fathers breathed out a nasal Amen, echoed as it were by the falling of some score of seats, which the most old-fashioned of the congregation still persisted in holding up, in spite of the absence of the reason that originally induced it; namely, very crowded pews. I had not at first observed,' he continued, 'the presence of nursing infants in the congregation; but, after I began my sermon, I was frequently obliged to pause—I hope I did it with becoming patience—until their more pressing appeals were ended. At the hour of communion, half a dozen of the voluntary choir marched up to the table, and surrounded me with so many apparent instruments of defence, that for an instant I was fairly perplexed, and meditated an escape. I really wonder that a cultivated man like my brother-in-law can content himself in so barbarous a place.' The laugh that ran round the table, Margaret, so grated on my ear, that I pleaded some child's excuse, and got away. In the following summer, a journey which I took with your dead mother, a few months before her death, introduced me to the congregation so humorously described. I had my own share of infirmity, and I found it very hard to listen to the service, interrupted as it was by the falling of hob-nailed shoes upon the uncovered floor of the aisle, the crying of infants, the nestling of a dozen dogs round the communion-rail, and the shuddering cough of as many horses without. After the morning service was ended, I walked with your mother on the green turf of the neighboring cemetery. She sat down under a clump of pines, and I nestled at her feet. 'Aunt Mary,' I said hastily, 'don't you think it is wrong to bring babies to church?' 'You were very restless all through the service, James,' she replied, smiling; 'and I am not sure, that your unchristian state of mind did not grieve the pastor far more than the chorus of the infants. I am too old to share your impatient feelings; and, dearly as I love the quiet of a city church, I saw a great deal of beauty in the condition of things which annoyed you so much. The persons who come to this service employ no servants; and, if the babies were kept at home, at least a dozen adults must remain with them. Many a mother has walked more than a mile this morning with her baby in her arms. Know-

ing this, I feel great pleasure in the gentleness of their pastor. Have you not observed with what loving patience he waits for the quiet of the little nestlers, and how carefully he banishes from his face any expression of impatience which might grieve the already harassed mothers?' 'But the dogs, Aunt Mary?' 'To be sure, they might be kept away, but at some cost, while the warm weather requires open doors.' 'Why don't they carpet their floors, then?' 'Because they can hardly raise money enough to pay their minister. Your father, James, pays fifty dollars every year towards Dr. Arnold's support; but these men part with a far larger per centage on their income.' 'But the choir, Aunt Mary, why don't they make that better? They don't pay that.' 'No, James; but it cannot be altered for the better without a total change, and that would pain the old men who have sat in it from boyhood. There is a music of the heart, which their pastor values more than the mere harmony of voices; and I have often been told, that a dissatisfied choir could easily divide a public society.' 'But they need not go up to the table, aunt.' 'No, they *need* not; but it would pain them to be told of it, so they are permitted to stay until some younger choristers happen to take their places.' I remember that I drew a long sigh, and said it was very bad. My aunt smiled, and replied: 'Perhaps Margaret may live to see you the minister of a country parish. If so, whenever you are tempted to lose your patience, think of this hour. When you enter the church, you will find the people clustered in pews eating their noon-day lunch. There are bottles of sweet milk for the babies, and heaps of gingerbread and pie under almost every seat. The intermission is not long enough for the family meal. If this annoys you, turn rather to the green glades of Palestine, where Jesus taught. Remember how the people, with their children in their arms, clustered about him, — some on mules or horses, and many more on foot; — how they followed him, not for hours merely, but for days; and how the divine Master, rejoicing in their thirst for truth, satisfied with his own hands the hunger of the body; — what disorderly groups of soiled and way-worn travellers must at times have pressed around him; — what loving, eager children must have climbed his knee, after the sacred 'forbid them not' was repeated to the people! He spoke under the open sky; and the song of birds, the hum of insects, and the lowing of cattle, must have often been heard above,

—no, not *above*, but mingled with his voice. James, I sometimes think there is no audience so nearly like that our Saviour oftenest had, as the audience of an old-fashioned country church. Here, the poor, the halt, and the blind sit in the best seats, and share the ministrations with the rich, the active, and the clear-sighted.' We went silently into the church, dear Margaret, and I listened, in full sympathy with their pastor, to the evening service. I have never forgotten it; and consecrated to religious patience, by your mother's prayer at my bedside that night, I came to my work here." "But you promised," I said, after the tumult of recollections which this narrative had called up had somewhat subsided, "you promised to tell me something of your intercourse with your people. You tell me that you encountered sin, and misery, and poverty, as hopeless as that of cities; that there is an immense spiritual work to do here. I would fain see how all this can be true of a green little glade like yours. I can well see, that, although babies are no longer brought to church, and the falling seats of the old pews have long since parted with their hinges, you may have worse obstacles to encounter than the crying of the one, or the grating of the other." "Not to-night, Margaret," he answered: "for the present, let me think happier thoughts, and leave my responsibility with God." "But, James," I persisted, "tell me, at least, what became of this little country parish." My cousin turned very pale; but he answered my question. "Its pastor was a man of great talents and distinguished family. His health was very feeble. He and the young girl who should have shared his hearth nobly relinquished marriage and the ties of family, in order to save it from perishing. She died, one cold winter, of exposure to the draughts of the district school-house where she taught; and he, unaided by clerical sympathy, unwilling to beg for what was not offered, soon followed her. His Society valued him as he deserved, and held together, while they could, for his sake. But, after a time, they despaired. No strong man came to save them, and those who felt a sincere interest in religion joined a Methodist Society, not entirely deserted by the spirit."

C. W. H. D.

THE WISDOM OF THE SON OF SIRACH.*

(Continued.)

CHAP. XXII. 27.—XXIII. 27.—THE NEED OF RELIGION TO KEEP THE HEART AND ITS ISSUES.

- 27 Who shall set a watch before my mouth ?
 And upon my lips a seal of prudence ;
 Lest my mouth cause me to fall,
 And lest my tongue destroy me.
- XXIII. 1. O Lord, Father and God of my life,
 Leave me not to their will,
 Nor suffer them to make me fall.
- 2 Who shall set scourges over my thoughts ?
 And over my heart the discipline of wisdom ;
 That they spare not mine offences,
 Nor pass by my sins ;
- 3 Lest mine offences multiply,
 And lest my sins abound ;
 Lest I fall before mine adversaries,
 And mine enemy rejoice over me.
- 4 O Lord, Father and God of my life,
 Suffer not my eyes to wander ;
- 5 Turn from me fond desires,
- 6 Gluttony and lust, — let them not seize me ;
 And leave me not to a shameless spirit.
- 7 Children, receive instruction for the mouth :
 He that keepeth it shall not be a captive.
- 8 The sinner (against it) shall be forsaken ;
 The reviler and the proud shall fall thereby.
- 9 Accustom not thy mouth to an oath,
 Neither to the naming of the Holy One.
- 10 For as a servant, oftentimes beaten,
 Is never free from the weal of stripes,
 So he that sweareth, and oftentimes nameth the Lord,
 Is never cleared from sin.

* By mistake, a transposition of passages has taken place in the publication of this valuable translation. The reader will easily rectify the error, by observing the figures that designate chapter and verse. — Ed.

- 11 A man of many oaths multiplies transgression ;
And the scourge departs not from his house.
If it be in ignorance, it is a sin ;
If in carelessness, the sin is double ;
But if in levity, he is without excuse,
His house shall be full of sorrows.
- 12 There is a word which is clothed with death :
Let it not be found in the heritage of Jacob ;
Let such things be far from the godly ;
Let them not wallow in such sins.
- 13 Accustom not thy mouth to filthy vulgarity,
For therein is the cause of iniquity.
- 14 Remember thy father and thy mother,
Even when thou sittest among the great ;
Nor forget them in any presence ;
Neither in thy intercourse be so foolish
As to wish thou wert not born of them,
Or to curse the day of thy birth.
- 15 The man that is accustomed to use shameful words,
Can never be taught all the days of his life.
- 16 Two kinds of sin multiply transgressions ;
And the third brings down vengeance.
A burning soul, like burning fire,
Is never quenched, until it be consumed.
A man of lust, abusing his own body,
Will never cease, until the fire has burnt out.
- 17 To the lustful man every loaf is sweet :
He cannot rest until he accomplish his desire.
- 18 A man that goes into other than his own chamber,
Saying in his heart, Who seeth me ?
Darkness around me, and the walls hide me ;
No man seeth me ; whom shall I fear ?
The Most High will not remember my sins ; —
- 19 The eyes of men are his fear,
And he knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord,
A myriad-fold brighter than the sun,
See all that is in the most hidden darkness.
- 20 Before creation, all things were known to him ;
So also, after all were finished.

- 21 The punishment of such shall be in the open streets,
And where he suspecteth not, he shall be taken.
- 22 The same shall befall a wife that leaveth her husband,
And bringeth forth an heir by another.
- 23 For, first, she is disobedient to the law of the Most High;
And, secondly, she wrongeth her husband;
And, thirdly, by her wanton adultery,
She hath brought forth children by another man.
- 24 She must be brought before the congregation,
And the visitation shall be upon her children.
- 25 Her children shall not put forth roots,
Neither shall her branches bring forth fruit.
- 26 She shall leave her memory to be cursed,
And her shame shall never be wiped out.
- 27 Thus all that come after her shall learn,
"Nothing is better than the fear of the Lord,
And nothing is sweeter than keeping his commandments."

CHAP. XXIV.—THE PRAISE OF WISDOM.

- 1 WISDOM praiseth herself;
And honoreth herself among her people;
- 2 In the congregation of the Most High, she openeth her mouth;
In his mighty presence declareth her honor:—
- 3 "I came out of the mouth of the Most High;
And, like a cloth, clothed the earth.
- 4 My tent have I placed on high,
And my throne on the pillars of clouds.
- 5 Alone have I compassed the heavens,
And walked through the depths of the deep.
- 6 Among the waves of the sea, and on every dry land,
In every people and nation, I have taken possession.
- 7 Now after all this, I seek for rest;
And in whose inheritance shall I abide?
- 8 The Creator of all things giveth me directions;
He that made me gives a resting-place;
He saith, 'Pitch thy tent with Jacob;
Yea, cast thy lot with Israel.'
- 9 Before eternity, he first created me;
And through all ages I can never fail.

- 10 In the holy tabernacle I served before him,
Likewise on Zion was I firmly fixed.
- 11 In the beloved city he gave me a resting-place ;
Yea, in Jerusalem he fixed my power.
- 12 I took root among an honored people,
In the country of the Lord's inheritance.
- 13 I was lofty as a cedar on Lebanon,
Or as a cypress on the mount of Hermon ;
- 14 I was lofty as a palm-tree at Engeddi ;
Or like a rose-tree at Jericho ;
Like a noble olive in the meadows ;
Tall as a plane-tree by the water-course.*
- 15 Like cinnamon, and like the spicy thorn, I spread my odors ;
Sweetly smelling like the choicest myrrh ;
Like galbanum and onyx, and the dropping balsam,
And the fume of frankincense in the temple.
- 16 I, like a terebinth, stretch out my branches,
My branches, branches full of glory and grace.
- 17 I, like a vine, put forth my graceful shoots,
And my flowers are fruitful of glory and riches.
- 18 Come unto me, ye that long for me,
And be ye filled with my fruits.
- 20 For the remembrance of me is sweeter than honey,
The possession of me sweeter than honey in the comb.
- 21 They that eat me lose not their hunger ;
Nor they that drink me, their thirst.
- 22 He that hearkeneth to me shall not be put to shame ;
They that labor for me shall not do amiss."
- 23 All these things saith the book of the covenant of God Most
High ;
The law which Moses enjoined on us ;
The inheritance of the congregations of Jacob.
- 25 It runs, full as Pison, with wisdom ;
Full as Tigris in the days of first-fruits ;
- 26 It abounds, full as Euphrates, with good sense ;
Full as Jordan in the days of the harvest.
- 27 It spreads, wide as the Nile, its instruction ;
Or as Gihon in the days of the vintage.
- 28 The first man knew not in full this inheritance,
No more shall the last search it throughout.

* The button-ball of the East.

- 29 For its thoughts are broader than the sea,
Its counsels deeper than the mighty deep.
- 30 "And I, like a channel from the river,
Or like a conduit, came into a paradise.
- 31 I said: I will give drink to my garden,
Yea, make my flower-bed drunken.
When, lo! my channel became a river,
And my river became a sea.
- 32 I will still give the light of instruction, like the day-dawn,
And send out its far-reaching rays.
- 33 I will still pour out my teachings, like inspiration,
To stand through the ages of ages.
- 34 Lo! I labor, but not for myself,
But for all that shall seek my instruction."
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THE TANGLED SKEIN.

It was a tangled skein; it required much patience to wind it, but it could have been done, and then it would have been far more serviceable; but it cost too great an effort to disentangle it, and *so it was cut, and wound in small lengths*. What a similitude is here to the manner in which we use much of the discipline of life! We are perplexed; the future looks complicated; we have not patience to endure all its foreshadowings, and so we recklessly cut off the intended benefit of the experience, and use it up as best we may, to subserve *our* purpose, not God's design for our good. There is nothing which more betrays our want of faith, than our querulous endeavors to interpret what this and that event was meant to accomplish. We were not prepared for some shock that may have fallen upon us; there is a rebellion in the soul which dares not make an audible utterance, but it saps the foundation of our confidence; and, while it is somewhat awed, it never reverently listens to the import of such teachings. Mark that furrowed countenance, that wan expression of despair! They have cut the skein which was given them to untangle. The virtue of patience was not sought; with her they have no affinity.

In nothing do we more betray our folly than in our affecting to be wise concerning God's providences. We would unseal the hidden volume, and read the import of what was not intended for *us*.

We cannot wait for an interpretation. We must have our own wishes accomplished, and so we stumble on, groping after light, and often closing the only avenues through which it glimmers. Wait, my friend; see that all the threads are properly adjusted; preserve as many unbroken as thou canst; and when there is an entanglement, do not recklessly break them. By a little more patience, thou mayst succeed in using the whole skein, without any loss or interruption to thy labor. Fret not thyself because thou couldst not wind it all uninterruptedly. It was meet it *should* be tangled: thou will realize it to-morrow. H. S. E.

A LOST HOUR.

Lost, lost, lost!

A gem of countless price,
Cut from the living rock,
Engraved in Paradise.
Set round with three times eight
Large diamonds clear and bright;
And each with sixty smaller ones,
All changeful as the light.

Lost where the thoughtless throng
In fashion's mazes wind,
Where trilleth folly's song,
Leaving a sting behind.
Yet to my hand 'twas given
A golden harp to buy,
Such as the white-robed choir attune
To deathless minstrelsy.

Lost, lost, lost!

I feel all search is vain:
That gem of countless cost
Can ne'er be mine again.
I offer no reward;
For, till these heart-strings sever,
I know that Heaven's intrusted gift
Is swept away for ever.

Monday Night.